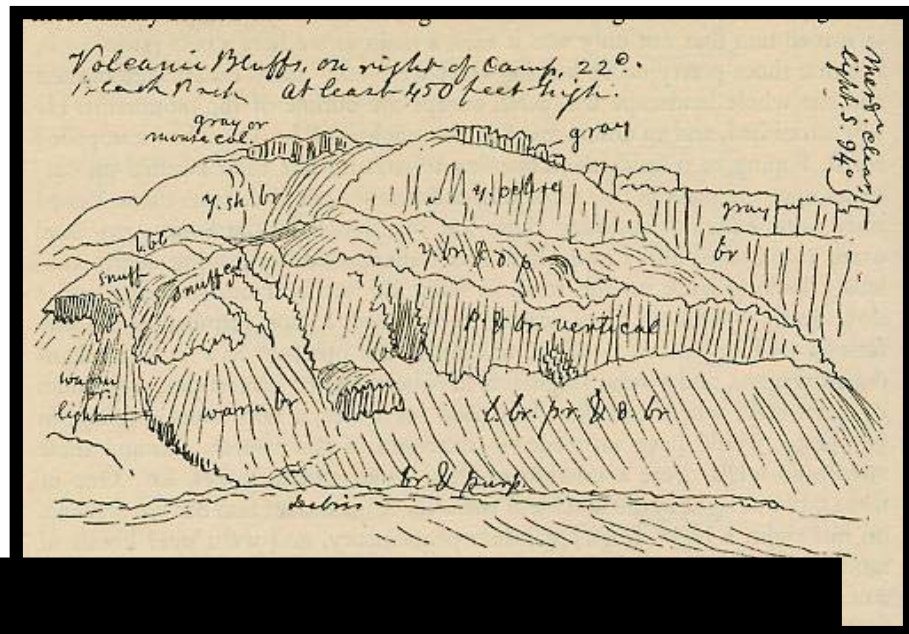


Bruff's 1849  
sketch of  
"Black Rock  
Promontory"



# Chapter 3

## Implementation

# Chapter 3



## Implementation

*Looking through the  
narrows of High Rock  
Canyon to its confluence  
with the East Fork*

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### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The Black Rock-High Rock RMP provides broad direction to meet the requirements of the NCA Act. Implementation of an RMP involves completion of many tasks. Some these tasks are completed when the plan is adopted, while others will continue over the 20-year life of the plan. This section provides a framework to guide implementation of the planning decisions contained in the RMP, and future actions that may occur as a result of this plan. Implementation of future actions will often require additional site-specific planning to implement the broad guidance contained in the RMP. This chapter also contains information on the process to maintain the RMP in the future as additional information becomes available and changes in conditions or resource uses change.

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### 3.2 IMPLEMENTATION/BUSINESS PLAN

An Implementation/Business Plan will be completed after the RMP is adopted. The purpose of the Implementation/Business plan is to outline the priority tasks and resources needed during the first 3 to 5 years of implementation of the RMP. The Implementation Plan will also contain a schedule for the development of the priority activity plans identified in the RMP including:

- Transportation/Sign Plan
- Cultural Resource Management Plan
- Wilderness Management Plan
- Recreation Area Management Plan
- Visitor Education and Interpretation Plan

More information about the priority activity plans is contained in section 3.4.

The Implementation/Business Plan will also contain:

- Guidance on Resource Advisory Council supported subgroups to assist BLM with management of the planning area
- Results of the consistency review of existing BLM activity plans
- Cost estimates for the first five years of implementation of the RMP
- Strategies for funding implementation of the RMP

- A schedule of implementation actions.

During development of the Implementation/Business Plan, several workshops including one for the public, Tribal, State and other agencies, will be conducted to educate the BLM staff in both the Winnemucca and Surprise Field Offices and external parties about the RMP, how it will be implemented and to encourage partnerships to improve the efficiency of implementation efforts and cost-effectiveness.

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### **3.3 TIME FRAMES FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

Implementation of decisions made through this planning process will occur in several phases. Although the use of the word “phase” implies sequential steps, some of the phases may be implemented concurrently. These phases include:

**Pending/Ongoing:** Generally, any ongoing, short-term activity will not be changed as a result of the RMP decisions. Short-term activities where National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis has been completed and decisions are pending will be screened to ensure they are consistent with the decisions in the Resource Management Plan prior to implementation.

**Short-term:** Actions where implementation will begin in the immediate future (i.e., within the first several years) are included in this category. These include development of the priority activity plans, implementing route closures, designating primitive camping areas and initiating a public information program. The monitoring/adaptive management process also needs to be initiated, to include establishment of coordination efforts and priorities for monitoring and research programs.

**Longer-Term:** This phase includes actions that need to be implemented over the planning horizon (up to 20 years). In addition to ongoing regulatory requirements, a major part of this effort includes site-specific project and activity planning needed to implement the RMP but not specifically outlined in the plan. The monitoring/adaptive management strategy continues to be implemented throughout the life of the plan, which may lead to changes in the plan through an amendment or revision process that considers information collected during implementation. This process is discussed in more detail in the sections that follow.

In the adaptive management process, evaluation of information collected may result in changes in time frames for implementation. Data may indicate a need to accelerate a protective management action or an action could be delayed because impacts are less than originally anticipated.

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### **3.4 LINKING BROAD-SCALE DECISIONS TO MORE DETAILED PLANS AND ACTIONS**

The RMP provides general direction and guidance for the entire planning area and makes some specific implementation decisions (e.g., route designations). However, most management actions necessary to achieve broad-scale objectives, such as developing an effective visitor information program, will require further planning and additional decisions. This additional planning will:

- Validate, refine or add-to information concerning current and historical resource conditions
- Address issues not appropriately addressed at the broad scale
- Prioritize implementation actions consistent with achievement of management goals and objectives
- Guide the type, location and sequence of appropriate management activities
- Identify specific monitoring and research needs

### Chapter 3 - Implementation

The additional detailed plans and actions will “step-down” broad-scale objectives and decisions in the RMP to site-specific actions. This step-down process will be designed to ensure that RMP goals, objectives and decisions are applied to on-the-ground management in a manner consistent with the RMP.

Where RMP decisions do not adequately provide the detail needed to manage resources and uses, activity plans may be used to supplement the RMP (i.e., planning specific to a particular resource program such as a Fire Management Plan or a Special Recreation Management Plan). Activity planning is an intermediate step between the broad guidance of the RMP and the specific details of project development. These plans fill a need to provide specific program guidance, while allowing the flexibility to adjust management decisions over the life of the RMP without requiring an RMP amendment.

The RMP identifies activity plans that should be completed in the first several years after the RMP is adopted. These highest priority plans include:

- **Transportation/Sign Plan:** This plan will identify the priorities and costs associated with management of the BLM road system to meet the requirements of the RMP, identify the initial on-the-ground transportation sign needs and define the guidelines to be used for changing road condition or maintenance and signage levels.
- **Cultural Resource Management Plan:** This plan will determine into which use categories site types will be placed. It will also identify priority areas for future inventory. The plan will include a context and research design to aid in the evaluation of cultural resources for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.
- **Wilderness Management Plan:** This plan will contain objectives for maintaining the area's wilderness resources and will outline the management actions and monitoring procedures by which the objectives will be accomplished. The plan will also establish the type and level of environmental assessment necessary, including “minimum requirement and minimum tool analyses” for all site-specific management actions.
- **Recreation Area Management Plan:** This plan will establish thresholds for resource conditions that if reached would trigger corrective recreation management actions. The plan will also provide guidance for implementing the Resource Monitoring System, Public Outreach Facilities, Recreation Site Development, Visitor Management, Camping Designations, and Signage.
- **Visitor Education and Interpretation Plan:** This plan will identify the priorities and costs associated with the management of visitor services for the planning area. The visitor education and interpretation plan will determine methods to be used to measure, evaluate, address or establish Visitor needs/demands, the Monitoring process for evaluation and revision of outreach materials, Interpretive themes, Types of information to be provided, Locations and techniques for distribution of outreach materials/programs, Construction guidelines/specifications, and Partnerships/programs that will be pursued.

Implementation of specific, on-the-ground management actions such as development of a campground or maintenance of a road may require detailed project plans. These plans will be consistent with the RMP and applicable activity plans.



*The  
southern  
end of  
Calico  
Mountain*

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## **3.5 COMPLIANCE WITH THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT**

The RMP includes goals, objectives and decisions that were subjected to environmental analysis as required by NEPA during the preparation of the RMP. Subsequent planning at the project or activity plan level will require additional NEPA analysis in most cases and rarely an amendment to the RMP. The BLM will continue to conduct site-specific inventories and perform appropriate level NEPA analyses as part of the planning and decision making processes described above. Management changes resulting from the adaptive management process can also require NEPA analysis. Changes beyond the scope of the land use plan that are deemed desirable in the adaptive management process, may result in a plan amendment.

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## **3.6 CONSULTATION, COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION**

This plan has been prepared in close coordination and collaboration with other federal agencies, State, Tribal and local governments, and other interested parties. Collaborative approaches to implementation are necessary to assure success. While the Bureau of Land Management retains the responsibility and authority for land management decisions, these decisions are more meaningful, effective and enduring if made in a collaborative and open process. Therefore, close working relationships among management and regulatory agencies need to be developed and maintained. In addition, others outside of the BLM (State and local agencies, universities, volunteers, etc.) should be involved in subsequent analysis, monitoring, evaluation, research, and adaptive management processes.

The ability of a subgroup formed by the two Resource Advisory Councils (RACs) with advisory responsibilities in the NCA Planning Area to provide high quality input into the planning process was essential to the timely completion of the RMP. The continuing involvement of these two RACs will assure that management decisions are made in a collaborative manner. Continuing opportunities for public participation may include, among other things:

- regular involvement of a RAC sanctioned group similar to the planning subgroup to provide the RACs with recommendations relating to the management of the planning area
- volunteer partnerships or assistance agreements with other agencies to complete assessments, establish baseline data, monitor, and recommend management actions as a result of these processes
- working groups, agreements and memorandums of understanding with State and Tribal governments.

The successful collaborative planning work of the RAC NCA Subgroup provides a model for how a similar group could help BLM to better manage the many diverse and sometimes conflicting uses in the NCA, associated Wilderness areas and South Playa. One of the RAC NCA Subgroup's final recommendations to the parent RACs was that a similar group be formed to help BLM and the parent RACs with future management of the planning area. Both RACs support this proposal.

Therefore, BLM will ask the Northeast California and Sierra Front-Northwestern Great Basin Resource Advisory Councils to form a collaborative subgroup with a suggested composition of 12 to 16 members with at least one member from each parent RAC, representing State, local and Tribal governments, and constituencies, groups and individuals with interests in the Black Rock-High Rock area to work with BLM on a regular basis to gain an in-depth understanding of management of the NCA, associated Wilderness areas and South Playa and to regularly report to the parent RACs. The RACs will also be asked to specify any interests they feel should always be represented on the subgroup (i.e.,

ranching, recreation, SRPs, OHV enthusiasts, etc.), and the length of terms of subgroup members (perhaps staggered 2- or 3-year terms).

Individual members of the subgroup will serve as information conduits between BLM and the groups and interests they represent, which will greatly enhance community involvement in management of the NCA. As a whole, the subgroup's purpose will be to provide detailed information and recommendations to the parent RACs concerning management of the area. The subgroup will not be an oversight or advisory group. The advisory function will remain where it currently is and where it belongs: solely within the authority and purpose of the parent Resource Advisory Councils. The subgroup will be a collaborative group and as such will be an invaluable asset to BLM, the RACs and the general public.

This general interest group may be supplemented by smaller focused workgroups established by the RACs to provide recommendations on short-term projects and technical issues of limited interest to such broadly based group.

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## 3.7 ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

The RMP will be implemented using adaptive management processes. Under adaptive management, decisions, plans and proposed activities are treated as working hypotheses rather than final solutions to management of resources and uses. For the purposes of this plan, adaptive management represents a process that tests, evaluates and adjusts the assumptions, objectives, actions, and subsequent on-the-ground results from the implementation of RMP decisions. Used effectively, adaptive management provides resource managers with the flexibility to respond quickly and effectively to changing resource and user conditions. Changes in management actions are based on site-specific resource monitoring and evaluation.

The intent of adaptive management is to allow future management actions, as applied through resource management guidelines, to fully incorporate the knowledge and experience gained up to that time from monitoring, evaluation and experimentation. However, adaptive management does not relieve managers of their responsibilities to consider the affects to the human environment of actions proposed under the guise of adaptive management. Manager would still be required to comply with the provisions of NEPA and other applicable laws, regulations and policies before such actions are applied. Certain actions proposed to apply adaptive management techniques may require amendment to the RMP before they could be employed.

Guidelines assure that constraints established in the RMP are consistently applied when management methods and practices are used to meet plan objectives. Examples of guidelines are the livestock grazing guidelines required by CFR 43 §4180, Land Health Standards. Guidelines will be developed for all programs and uses. Guidelines that already exist for many programs and uses will be adopted as is when reviews show them to be applicable to the Planning Area. New site-specific guidelines will also be developed as necessary.

The adaptive management process is a continuous cycle that includes the following four phases:

- **Planning:** Management guidelines, actions, and objectives are developed. Monitoring techniques and adjustment thresholds are designed based upon available information, past monitoring information and current scientific information.
- **Implementation:** Objectives, guidelines, actions and constraints developed and identified during planning processes at all scales are applied as on-the-ground management.
- **Monitoring:** Monitoring includes all efforts to document the current state of implementation, the resulting resource conditions as measured through indicators, and the effectiveness of the implementation. Monitoring is designed to tier from existing data and techniques, be outcome based, technically feasible, affordable, and operationally attainable. Two types of monitoring occur:

### Chapter 3 - Implementation

- **Implementation monitoring:** Determines whether the decisions and proposed actions developed during planning are actually being implemented.
- **Effectiveness monitoring:** Determines whether implemented decisions and actions have changed resource condition indicators. If so, determines whether the changes in the indicators are consistent with meeting the objectives.

When additional monitoring is required to fill information gaps, standardized monitoring techniques will be used where available before new techniques are developed. The BLM staff associated with the NCA and supported by technical experts in the Winnemucca and Surprise Field Offices will be responsible for developing monitoring and adaptive management protocols and ensuring that documentation is sufficient to facilitate feedback into the adaptive management process. Additional information on monitoring is discussed in section 3.8.

- **Evaluation:**

- **Modification Evaluation:** The part of the process through which specific objectives, actions, monitoring thresholds, and even resource condition indicators may be modified to better meet the goals of the plan.
- **Timing Evaluation:** determines the needs for and time frames during which changes to planning, implementation and monitoring should occur.

The BLM staff will also be responsible for ensuring that monitoring results and other new information is compiled and evaluated in accordance with the two evaluation phases discussed above. Additional information on evaluation is discussed in section 3.9.

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## 3.8 MONITORING

Monitoring will determine whether or not planning objectives are being met and ensure that BLM meets the commitments made in the plan. The information developed through monitoring will feed the evaluation process that may alter decisions or the timing of decisions, change implementation or maintain current management direction.

The key step in developing a monitoring strategy is to define the questions that must be answered to evaluate the attainment of broad-scale management goals and objectives in the RMP. These questions will be used to focus monitoring on appropriate issues and avoid gathering irrelevant information. Focused monitoring also helps to keep costs within agency budgets.

The first step is to select key monitoring elements and indicators that can be effectively sampled and can provide desired data at a reasonable cost. An example of such indicators is provided in Table 3-1. A standard set of core data elements will be collected. Core data, including data necessary to evaluate achievement of the applicable Land Health Standards, are the minimum set of variables to be collected at all scales. Standardized measurement and reporting protocols will be determined because the need for consistency is essential. Where possible, monitoring protocols will be designed to integrate existing monitoring efforts and will address multiple questions. Also, the design will have the flexibility to add data elements required to answer new questions raised during subsequent site-specific planning.

Determining the specific monitoring approach for any question requires knowledge of detailed information on existing conditions. For example, trend assessment first requires gathering baseline or status information. Just a few of the projects that have occurred or will be anticipated during implementation of the RMP include: Landscape scale vegetation assessments; overviews for paleontology, history and archaeology; NCA-wide surveys for special status species; collection of meteorological data at weather stations; and visitor use inventories. Data from these projects will be vital to monitoring trends. A monitoring strategy must also identify the techniques needed to acquire a complete picture of the structure and pattern of a resource (i.e., remote sensing, sample-based studies, modeling).

### Chapter 3 - Implementation

A monitoring system requires the development and use of indicators and thresholds based on guidelines. Thresholds are measurable indicators of when a change in management needs to be made. For example, the specific amount of resource impacts that would be tolerated before a campsite would be closed to public use and rehabilitated is a threshold. The development of indicators and thresholds will occur during the early part of plan implementation. Until these measures are in place, evaluations may not be completed. Indicators and thresholds will be periodically evaluated to assure that they remain appropriate for the Planning Area.

Table 3-1 Monitoring Indicators

Major Uses and Resources	Indicators to be Monitored
<b>Land Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Amount of Ground Cover</li> <li>- Evidence of Erosion</li> <li>- Vegetation Composition, Vigor and Structure</li> <li>- Riparian Functional Condition</li> <li>- Achievement of Water Quality Standards</li> <li>- Population and Habitat Diversity and Viability</li> <li>- Special Status Species Viability</li> <li>- Levels of Invasive Species</li> </ul>
<b>Transportation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Road Condition</li> <li>- Numbers of Vehicle Accidents</li> <li>- Numbers of Search and Rescue Incidents</li> <li>- Erosion/Resource Damage Associated with Roads</li> </ul>
<b>OHV Use</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Occurrences of New Tracks</li> <li>- Condition of Playa Surface</li> <li>- Changes in Dune Formation and Condition</li> </ul>
<b>Cultural Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evidence of Looting/Vandalism</li> <li>- Changes in Site Integrity</li> <li>- Erosion of Trail Traces</li> <li>- Unauthorized Use of Trails</li> </ul>
<b>Paleontological</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evidence of Looting/Vandalism</li> <li>- Changes in Site Integrity</li> </ul>
<b>Wilderness Values</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- See Land Health Indicators</li> <li>- Changes in Naturalness</li> <li>- Numbers of Encounters with Other Visitors</li> <li>- Motorized Trespass</li> <li>- Boundary Marking</li> <li>- Number of Wilderness Violations</li> </ul>
<b>ACECs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- See Land Health Indicators</li> <li>- See Cultural Resources Indicators</li> </ul>
<b>Vegetation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- See Land Health Indicators</li> </ul>
<b>Livestock Grazing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- See Land Health Indicators</li> </ul>
<b>Wild Horses &amp; Burros</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- See Land Health Indicators</li> <li>- Population Levels</li> <li>- Demographics</li> <li>- Herd Health</li> </ul>
<b>Wildland Fire</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fuel Characteristics</li> <li>- Burn Area Recovery</li> <li>- Rehabilitation Success</li> </ul>
<b>Fish &amp; Wildlife</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Population Numbers/Trends</li> </ul>



Major Uses and Resources	Indicators to be Monitored
	- Impacts to Habitat
<b>Special Status Species</b>	- See Land Health Indicators
<b>Visual Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Changes in Visual Quality</li> <li>- Changes to Visual Intrusions/Contrast</li> <li>- Uses comply with VRM Class</li> </ul>
<b>Water Resources</b>	- See Land Health Indicators
<b>Lands &amp; Realty</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Compliance with Stipulations</li> <li>- Numbers of Trespass Incidents</li> <li>- Access to Public Lands</li> </ul>
<b>Mineral Resource Uses</b>	- Compliance with Stipulations
<b>Soils</b>	- See Land Health Indicators
<b>Recreation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Site and Trail Encounters</li> <li>- Surface Permeability</li> <li>- Evidence of Human Waste</li> <li>- Vandalism</li> <li>- Area of Impact</li> <li>- SRP Stipulation Requirements</li> </ul>
<b>Public Information/ Visitor Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Brochure Distribution</li> <li>- Adequacy of Information</li> <li>- Visitor Satisfaction</li> <li>- Demand for Facilities</li> <li>- Numbers of Search and Rescue Incidents</li> <li>- Numbers of Law Enforcement Incidents</li> </ul>

## 3.9 RMP EVALUATION

Evaluations are the mechanism that reviews implementation of the RMP at several levels to see whether management goals and objectives are being met and determine whether management direction is sound. Evaluation examines management actions to determine whether they are consistent with thresholds established for the achievement of the objectives. If they are not, evaluation identifies the reasons. The conclusions are then used to make recommendations on whether to continue current management guidelines, to make changes in management practices to meet plan goals and objectives, or to amend the plan objectives or decision to better meet the capabilities of the land and the intent of the legislation.



### Chapter 3 - Implementation

Reviews of the evaluation process will be periodically scheduled to ensure that:

- Monitoring data is gathered sufficiently in advance to be used effectively in the evaluation process.
- Evaluations are conducted at intervals that allow for adjustments to be made in management direction before crises develop.

RMP Evaluations made too frequently will not detect changes in ecosystems because cost-effective monitoring systems cannot detect changes at this scale. On the other hand, if plan evaluations are delayed for too long or are not conducted at all, irreversible changes may take place without detection. RMP evaluations will be conducted every five years to assess the progress toward achieving broad-scale objectives and desired future conditions.

The evaluation process will review progress toward RMP implementation as well as new, scientific research, monitoring data, and other information on changed resource or social circumstances that that needs to be considered in future management. The evaluation may conclude:

- Management actions are moving resources toward the desired objectives. In this case, management actions are affirmed and may not need to be adjusted.
- Further research needs to be initiated or that actions must be adjusted to more efficiently achieve objectives of the Plan. If new information or research demonstrates better ways to achieve plan objectives, changes in activity planning and project implementation may be made.
- The objectives should be altered based on the new information. If the new information indicates that plan objectives should be reconsidered, a plan amendment may be required that will reexamine desired future conditions and ways to reach those conditions.

The credibility of an adaptive management process rests in part on the routine application of an outside check on the use of technical and scientific information, including monitoring. Independent reviews can provide verification that plans, evaluations and changes in management strategy are consistent with current scientific concepts. The Nevada and California BLM state offices and the community of scientific experts available outside the Bureau will conduct these reviews.

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## 3.10 CHANGING THE RMP

This RMP is expected to remain in place for up to 20 years. During that period, it is anticipated that occasional changes to the RMP will be needed because of new information, changes in resource uses, new legislation or other factors. All changes to the RMP will be documented in a manner that allows future tracking of any changes to the plan. Changes to the RMP fall into two categories:

- **RMP maintenance:** The process of modifying the text or maps of the RMP to correct clerical and technical errors or implement minor changes in wording or mapping. Maintenance actions will not change the intent of goals, objectives or decisions. Maintenance will be limited to minor corrections to improve clarity of the text, update textual or map information that changes over time or eliminate errors. Maintenance actions are not subject to the requirements of NEPA and do not require public involvement.
- **RMP Amendment:** Changes to the RMP that modify the intent of goals, objectives or decisions or add new decisions require amending the plan. Amendments may be the result of periodic evaluations that recommend changes to the plan, external factors including new legislation, or proposals from external parties. The amendment process includes public involvement, coordination and environmental analysis similar to that used in the preparation of the original RMP. The level of environmental analysis would be appropriate to the level of potential impacts expected to be caused by the proposed amendment and could include preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement.

## **3.11 RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER AGENCY PLANS**

Local, State, other federal agencies, and Indian Tribes in the immediate region routinely prepare plans that establish goals and direction for land use, economic development or resource management within their jurisdictions. Many of these plans bear directly on or are significantly affected by BLM plans for managing public lands. During implementation of the RMP, BLM will coordinate and consult with such agencies and Tribes to assure consistency with other approved plans to the extent these other plans are in compliance with federal laws, regulations and policies. The principles of community-based planning will be employed where timing, mutual interest and the availability of resources are appropriate to address economic, ecologic and land use issues of mutual concern.